

These are anxious days for all of us who are engaged in education. We rejoice in the fortitude, valour & devotion of our men at the front, & <sup>recognise that</sup> wonder ~~is it~~ due to the Schools <sup>as well as to the fact</sup> or is it that England still breeds such "very valiant creatures" as distinguished themselves on St Crispian's day; anyway it is good to know that "the whole army is illustrious." The chivalry of our officers we can trace ~~here readily~~ to the heroic impulse derived from the tincture of letters that every public schoolboy gets & to those 'playing fields' where boys acquire habits of obedience & command. But what about the abysmal ignorance shown ~~at~~ in the wrong thinking of many of the men who stay at home? Are we to blame? I suppose most of us feel that we are, for these men are educated as we choose to understand education; that is they can read & write, think, ~~peversely~~, & follow an argument, though they are unable to detect a fallacy. We say in perplexity, why do they seem incapable of generous impulse, of reasoned patriotism, of seeing beyond the circle of their own interests? shall we not find the answer in the fact, that ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> are ~~enabled~~ <sup>deprived</sup> for these things by education; these are the marks of educated persons; & when millions <sup>men</sup>

who should be the backbone of the country seem to be dead to public claims, we have to ask, why, then, are not these persons educated, & what have we given them in lieu of education?

Our errors in education, in so far as we have erred, turn upon the conception we form of "mind"; and however far our more philosophical Psychologists have advanced in realising a spiritual concept, the theory which has filtered through to most teachers implies the out-of-date notion of the development of faculties, which itself rests on the axiom that thought is no more than a function of the brain; a notion which is the sole justification for the scanty curricula provided in most of our schools, for the tortuous processes of our teaching, for the mischievous assertion that "it does not matter what a child learns but only how he learns it". We teach much & the children learn little; we find our compensation in the idea that we are 'developing' this or the other 'faculty', but a great future lies before the nation which shall perceive that knowledge is the sole content of education & that knowledge is the necessary daily food, let us say, of the mind. Teachers are looking out for the support of a sound theory, & perhaps the first condition of such a theory is that it ~~should~~ shall recognise with conviction the part mind plays in education & the conditions under which this prime agent acts; we want a

philosophy of education which, recognising that thought alone appeals to mind, that thought begets thought, shall relegate to their proper subsidiary places all those sensory & muscular activities which are supposed to afford intellectual as well as physical training. The latter is so important in & for itself that it needs not be bolstered up by the notion that it includes the whole, or the practically important part, of education. The same remark holds good of vocational training; our journals ask with scorn, - "Is there no education but what is got out of books & at school? Is not the lad who works in the fields getting education?" and the public lacks the courage to say definitely, - "No, he is not," because there is no clear notion as to what education means, & how it is to be

distinguished from vocational training which also is indispensable. *But the people themselves*

begin to understand and to clamour for an education which shall qualify the individual for life rather than for schooling alone. As a matter of fact, it is now the law in England through an existing statute, that in the necessary training, the most capable child in the primary school, during periods of the day, shall be given the opportunity of a personal interest in reading & writing, & that the child, as a rule, shall be given the opportunity of a personal interest in reading & writing.



111

Principles not generally recognised.

*shall*  
 I have enumerated some of the points in which our work seems to me exceptional in the hope of convincing the reader that unusual work carried on successfully in several hundred school-rooms - home & other - may claim to be based on principles not generally recognised; & it seems to me that the recognition of these principles should put our ~~national~~ national education on an intelligent basis, & should supply our people with such intellectual resources as make for general stability, joy in living, & personal initiative.

May I add one or two more arguments in support of my plea,-

The appeal of these principles & this method is not to the clever child only, but to the average & even to the 'Backward' child; indeed ~~we have had~~ *we have had* several marked successes with backward children.

This scheme of pretty wide & successful intellectual work is carried out in the same or less time than is occupied in the usual efforts in the same directions. There are no revision, no evening lessons, no cramming or 'getting up' of subjects; therefore there is much time for vocational work & for individual interests & hobbies.

*Children - always learners - they pay their  
 attention to their work & receive their  
 knowledge from their teachers. In fact, we  
 make no longer a constant distinction between*

*from the children, we find, interestingly, 10-  
no longer about them in the way we do now -  
impossible to believe.  
Amusing*

All intellectual work is done in the hours of morning school & the afternoons are given to field nature-studies, drawing, handicrafts, etc. Notwithstanding these limitations, <sup>the teachers</sup> we accomplish a surprising amount of good work.

It is not that "we" (i.e., the coadjutors who labour with me in what we believe to be a great cause, including hundreds of teachers & parents), it is not that we are persons of peculiar genius & insight; it is that I have chanced on a good thing, and,

"

"No gain

That I experience must remain unshared,"

"we, (including my fellow-thinkers & fellow labourers,) feel that the country & indeed the world should have the benefit of educational discoveries which act powerfully as a moral lever; for we are experiencing a new life with the joy of the Renaissance but without its pagan lawlessness. ~~We~~ <sup>we</sup> are all much occupied with problems which concern the amelioration of life for "our poorer classes"; but we do not sufficiently consider that, given, a better ~~and~~ education, & the problems of decent living will for the most part be resolved by the people themselves.

Having already described, in sundry volumes, the principles which guide us I can do no more here than give a short digest of those which especially concern school practice. & indeed, it is a thankless & difficult office to announce these "finds" which have come in one's way; if it



were not for a sense of public duty few persons would care to pose as discoverers; one thinks of the "Ointment of Lebanon!" But it is possible that if other persons who had chanced on these same principles & practices had made their discoveries known we should as a nation be in a better way to-day. Therefore let me trace as far as I can recall then the steps by which I arrived at a few of the conclusions upon which we are acting. While still a young woman I saw a great deal of a family of Anglo-Indian children who had come "home" to their grandfather's house & were brought up by an aunt who was my intimate friend. The children were astonishing to me; they were persons of generous impulses & sound judgment, of great intellectual aptitude, of imagination & moral insight. These last two points were, I recollect, illustrated one day by a little maiden of five who came home from her walk silent & sad; some letting alone & some wise openings brought out at last between sobs, - "a poor man - no home - nothing to eat - no bed to lie upon, -" & then the child was relieved by tears. Such incidents are common enough in families, but they were new to me. I was reading a good deal of philosophy & "Education" at the time, for I thought with the enthusiasm of a young teacher that education should regenerate the world. I had the direction of an Elementary School & a pioneer Church High School for girls at this time, so that I was enabled to study children in large groups; these children, also, were astonishingly intelligent, but children at school are not so self-revealing

as children at home; I began under the guidance of those Anglo-Indian children to take the measure of a Person, & soon began to suspect ~~that~~ a fact that had dawned upon earlier educationalists, that children are more than we, their elders, except that their ignorance is illimitable.

One limitation I did discover in the minds of these little people, my friend insisted that they could not understand English Grammar; I maintained that they could & wrote a little Grammar (still waiting to be prepared for publication!) for the two of seven & eight, but she was right; I was allowed to give the lessons myself with all the lucidity & freshness I could command, but their minds rejected the abstract conceptions proper to 'Grammar'. But I was beginning to make discoveries, the second being that the mind of a child takes or rejects according to its needs. From this point it was not difficult to go on to the perception that, whether in taking or rejecting, the mind was functioning for its own 'nourishment'; that the mind, in fact, requires sustenance as does the body, in order that it may increase & be strong, but because the mind is not to be measured or weighed but is spiritual, so its sustenance must be spiritual too, must, in fact, be ideas (in the Platonic sense of images). I soon perceived that children are well-equipped to deal with ideas, & that explanations, questionings, amplifications, are unnecessary & wearisome.



Then arose the question - Cannot people get on with very little knowledge? Is it really necessary after all? My children-friends supplied the answer: their "satiabile curiosity" shewed me that the wide world & its history was barely enough to satisfy a child who had not been made apathetic by a sort of spiritual malnutrition. What, then, is knowledge, was the next question that occurred, a question which the ~~intellectual~~ intellectual labour of ages has not settled, but perhaps this is enough to go on with, that only, becomes knowledge to a person which he has assimilated, which his mind has acted upon. Children's aptitude for knowledge & their eagerness for it made for the conclusions that the field of a child's knowledge may not be artificially restricted, that he has a right to & necessity for as much and as varied knowledge as he is able to receive; & that the limitations in his curriculum should depend only upon the age at which he must leave school; in a word, a common curriculum appears to be due, for all children up to the age of, say, fourteen or fifteen, framed upon that saying of Comenius, - "All knowledge for all men."

We have left behind the feudal notion that intellect is a class prerogative, that intelligence is a matter of inheritance & environment; inheritance no doubt means much but everyone has a very mixed inheritance; environment makes for satisfaction or uneasiness; but



education is of the spirit & is not to be taken in by the eye or effected by the hand; mind appeals to mind & thought begets thought & that is how we become educated. For this reason we owe it to every child to put him in communication with great minds that he may get at great thoughts; with the minds, that is, of those who have left us great works, & the only method of vital education appears to be that children should read worthy books, many books, should read & see, & hear.

It will be said on the one hand that many schools have their own libraries or the scholars have the free use of a public library & that the children do read; & on the other, that the literary language of first-rate books offers an impassable barrier to working-men's children. In the first place we all know that desultory reading is delightful & incidentally profitable but is not education, whose concern is knowledge. That is, the mind of the desultory reader only rarely makes the act of appropriation which is necessary before the matter we read becomes personal knowledge. We must read in order to know or we do not know by reading. As for the question of literary form, many circumstances & considerations which it would take too long to describe here brought me to perceive that delight in literary form is native to all of us until we are 'educated' out of it. A happy illustration reached me lately in the shape of classical tales, Bible tales, historical narratives, records of observations in natural history, all told at length with

the simplicity, directness, verve, & fluency proper to literature. The class of forty children of whose work I have already spoken belongs to a school in a mining village; they got their knowledge direct from books, read consecutively all through, books of a certain calibre, not diluted nor explained nor illustrated nor handled in any way, & the great joy of both teachers & children in education of this sort was a revelation. This important experiment in the West Riding has been by means of careful nursing been brought to a very successful issue by Mrs T Francis Steinthal.

I can imagine that the reader is somewhat in the position of the audience of De Quincey's young brother when he declared to them his ability to walk on the ceiling, - " & if for five minutes, why not for half-an-hour, for hours?" Whereupon they all cried out that it was the five minutes they were in doubt about. In like manner the reader may say, - Guarantee to us the attention of our scholars & we will guarantee their due progress in what Colet calls "good literature". It is difficult to explain how I came to a solution of a puzzling problem, - how to secure attention. Much observation of children, various incidents from one's general reading, the recollection of my own childhood & the consideration of my present habit of mind brought me to the

see Preface.





13 p 12 p n e u 3 w



24 p2 p107











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